United Nations CEDAW/C/LAO/8-9

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
18 August 2017

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Eighth and ninth periodic reports of States parties due in 2014

Lao People's Democratic Republic*

[Date received: 3 August 2017]

Note: The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

17-14267 (E) 250817

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Abbreviations

ACWC	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of W and Children
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
ADWLE	Association for Development of Women and Legal Education
BPFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CAMCID	Community Association for Mobilizing Knowledge in Development
CARE	CARE International
CAT	Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Degrading Treatment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CO	Concluding Observation
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization to the United Nations
GDA	Gender Development Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimina
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IMS	Information Management System
KfW	KreditanstaltfürWiederaufbau
LAI	Lao Australia Institute
LDWDC	Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre
LCB	Lao Statistic Bureau
LSIS	Lao Social Indicator Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHP	Meaying Huam Pattana
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
ODA	Official Development Assistance
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter I

Introduction

1. Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981. In 2008, Lao PDR submitted the combined sixth and seventh reports on the implementation of CEDAW. In 2013, in order to respond to the Concluding Observations made by the CEDAW Committee (hereafter referred to as the COs), the Lao PDR submitted two additional reports on violence against women (Para. 24) and on women migrant workers (Para. 43).

2. During 2010-2015, the Lao Government put great efforts to the implementation of the 7th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (7th NSEDP), setting the goal of graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2020. A core component of these development efforts includes the implementation of the policy on the elimination of discrimination against women which focuses on gender equality, promotion of advancement of women and comprehensive empowerment of women.

3. This report, the combined eighth and ninth periodic report that responds to the COs from the sixth and seventh periodic report, includes information on the implementation of the policy on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women which focuses on gender equality, promotion of the advancement of women, comprehensive empowerment of women and the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the relevant Millennium Development Goals.

4. In the process of drafting this report, the NCAW played a central role to assist the Lao Government in disseminating CEDAW and COs and collecting information on the implementation of the COs. Firstly, the NCAW published handbooks on the COs from sixth and seventh periodic report in both the English and Lao languages, and disseminated those handbooks to the Sub-CAWs in line ministries and organizations at the central and local levels, the National Assembly and judicial agencies and mass organizations to enhance their understanding of the obligations under CEDAW in order to incorporate them into policies, strategies and work plans of their organizations, as well as adopt concrete measures for their implementation. Secondly, the NCAW organized series of consultative workshops to disseminate and share the COs together with Development Partners, such as UNWOMEN, UNFPA, and other stakeholders in the implementation process. Thirdly, in terms of collecting information on the implementation of CEDAW, the NCAW conducted a series of consultative workshops with Sub-CAWs at the central and local levels. At the local level, the NCAW conducted the review and assessment of the implementation of COs in 3 provinces, namely, Luang Namtha, Xekong, Borikhamxay, and Vientiane Capital, as an example of the implementation of the COs. In this process, there were onsite visits by the NCAW to some villages where the Development Partners-supported projects were in the process of implementation. In addition, the NCAW organized biannual and annual meetings for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 to review the implementation of COs in cooperation with line ministries, organizations, local administrations, and mass organizations.

5. The report compiles information and statistics provided by the National Statistics Bureau, Sub-CAWs, and Development Partners, in particular UNWOMEN, UNFPA, International Financial Institutions, INGOs, and also by local CSOs (NPAs). The NCAW also organized a series of consultative workshops

to share the draft report with relevant ministries, local administrations and other stakeholders in order to get more inputs to the report.

6. This Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports covering the period of 2010-2014 are submitted together with the Common Core Document to the UN CEDAW Committee.

7. The report has 3 Chapters as follows:

Chapter I: General Introduction

Chapter II: The Implementation of the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee on the sixth and seventh periodic reports

Chapter III: Conclusion

8. The progress report of the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports.

Chapter II

Implementation of concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee on the sixth and seventh periodic reports

Articles 1-4

National Assembly (CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 8)

9. The National Assembly Women's Caucus was established by the National Assembly in 2010 is an organization of female members of the National Assembly under the supervision of the National Assembly Standing Committee. The NA Women's Caucus focuses on mainstreaming gender equality into law making process, the exercising oversight over the implementation of the Constitution, laws and policies concerning gender equality, women's advancement and mother and child issues in order to achieve the relevant MDGs, promote the development and protection of women and children.

10. The National Assembly Women's Caucus consists of all female members of the NA and has a secretariat to assist in its operation. The Caucus has set a good example in advocacy and mobilization of the support for women and child-related tasks, especially in combating violence against women and children and also reviews laws and regulations in main sectors that are related to women and children.

11. In 2011, the Women's Caucus developed their Action Plan (2011-2015) and the Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in the NA's VII Legislature (2011-2015). The Action Plan consists of 12 programs:

- Development program for National Coordination Mechanism between the NA Women's Caucus, Lao Women's Union (LWU) and the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women (Lao NCAW);
- Program to monitor the implementation of policy, Constitution, laws and CEDAW in the constituencies;
- Program to contribute to the making and improvement of laws related to the protection of rights and interests of women and children to promote the advancement of women;
- Program to promote representation of Lao women of all ethnic groups in the constituencies;

- Program on cooperation with foreign parliamentary Women's Caucuses;
- Program to improve gender mainstreaming strategy in activities of the NA as per the Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in the NA's VII Legislature;
- Other programs.

12. Since 2012 the NA Women's Caucus has implemented activities in several provinces and sectors[1] in order to oversee and support the strategies on women's advancement and development, the participation of women in socio-economic development, implementation of MDGs and CEDAW, to collect information on women in decision making positions at each level, to disseminate the mandate, rights and duties of the NA members of VII Legislature, and to obtain comments and suggestions for citizens, local administrations.

Definition of non-discrimination against women CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 9

13. The National Assembly has adopted the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Children[2] which is in line with the definition of non-discrimination against women prescribed in CEDAW and other international human rights instruments. Article 4 paragraph 14 of this Law defines that "discrimination against women means any distinction, exclusion or restriction that is based on a women's race, colour, sex, ethnicity, religion, language, education, knowledge and capacity, intelligence, socio-economic status, health status, physical appearance, disability, and other aspects that make women's rights unrealized." The Penal Law also defines in Article 177 that "any person who discriminates against any woman, or who keeps separate from or prevents, or restricts the participation of any woman in, any political, economic, socio-cultural or family activities based on gender reasons, shall be punished by imprisonment from one year to three years and shall be fined from 1.000.000 Kip to 3.000.000 Kip".

Legal Status of the treaty CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 10

14. In the implementation of this Concluding Observation and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Bejing+20 related to women and economy, the Lao PDR has achieved the following progress:

15. The promotion and protection of women's rights is a priority of the Lao Government, which is reflected in the commitment of the Government to CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other international conventions. The Lao Government has adopted laws and enforced measures to ensure the effectiveness of a legal framework aimed at protecting the interests of women and preventing violence against women and girls. Advocacy, dissemination and enforcement of laws and regulations, especially access to justice for women are crucial to ensure the rights of women.

16. In order to ensure the implementation of CEDAW, the National Assemble has adopted a number of legislations that incorporated provisions of CEDAW, such as the amended Constitution of the Lao PDR 2015, Article 35 and Article 37 of which define that all Lao citizens are equal before the law irrespective of their gender, social status, education, beliefs and ethnicity, and Lao citizens of both genders enjoy equal rights in the political, economic, cultural and social fields and in family

[1] Vientiane Capital, XiengKuang, Laungprabang, Bokeo, Salavanh, Xekong and Attapeu provinces; Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

[2] National Assembly Resolution number 015/NA, 23 December 2014; Approving the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Children promulgated by the Presidential Ordinance number 031/PO, 30 January 2015.

affairs. Article 29 of the Constitution states that the State, society and families attend to implementing development policies and supporting the progress of women and to protecting the legitimate rights and benefits of women and children. Up to present, the National Assembly has adopted a number of new laws and amended laws to be in line with the promotion of gender equality, elimination of all forms of discriminations and violence against women and children. These include the Law on Development and Protection of Women 2004, the Law on Women's Union 2013, the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Children 2015, the amended Law on Education 2015 (Article 4 stipulates that the Government creates equal opportunity for the Lao people of all ethnic groups to receive education especially those living in the remote areas, women and children and the disadvantaged groups), the amended Law on Labour 2013 (Article 45 stipulates that employee who performs equality, quality and value of work are entitled to receive equal salary, wages and other benefits without any discrimination as to race, nationality, gender, age, religion, beliefs, or social-economic status), and the amended Law on Criminal Procedure 2012 (Article 13 stipulates that the criminal proceedings must be conducted on the basis of equal rights of all citizens before the laws and the people's courts without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, social-economic status, language, education, occupation, belief, place of residence, etc.). Furthermore, the amended Law on State Budget 2015, Article 6 (11) on the principles of the State budget's expenditure stipulates that the expenditure of State budget shall ensure gender equality.

17. The Lao PDR has 2 legislations governing the domestic legal status of international treaties to which the Lao PDR is party, including CEDAW. Firstly, the Presidential Ordinance on Conclusion, Accession, and Implementation of Treaties 2009, Article 35 of the Ordinance provides that the implementation of treaties is the transposition of treaty provisions into national policies and laws in accordance with the treaty purpose. The national implementation of treaties is undertaken through the formulation and improvement of the State's policies, the amendment of existing laws and the enactment of new laws to ensure consistency and compliance with the treaties to which the Lao PDR is a party; and Article 31, Para 4 stipulates that "If any domestic law provision is different or contrary to a provision of an international treaty on the same matter to which the Lao PDR is party, the provision of the international treaty shall prevail". Secondly, the Law on Law Making 2012, Articles 7 (2) and 9 provide that the formulation and amendment of laws and sub-laws shall be consistent with the treaties to which the Lao PDR is party and if the provisions of the existing legislation or newly adopted legislation are inconsistent with the provisions of the related treaties to which the Lao PDR is party the provisions of the treaties shall prevail and the national legislation concerned shall be amended in due time.

Visibility of the Convention CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 12

18. The Lao Government has attached importance to promoting and protecting women rights through raising awareness, enhancing capacity building and improving the existing measures and mechanisms in order to ensure the visibility and awareness of CEDAW and its application to all sectors.

19. The NCAW, as the inter-ministerial mechanism mandated to assist and support the Government on the promotion of the advancement of women, acting as the national focal point for the implementation of CEDAW, has organized a series of workshops, seminars and training of trainers (TOT) programs on disseminating and raising awareness of CEDAW and Concluding Observations (COs), publishing and distributing booklets to NCAW and Sub-CAWs in line ministries and government

officials at the central and local levels, members of the National Assembly and Provincial People's Assemblies, prosecutors and judges, and the general public.

20. From 2013-2015 the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in cooperation with UNWOMEN organized a series of seminars on the topic of Access to Justice for Women with the participation of 216 officials, of whom 42.6 per cent were female who came from justice sector institutions, such as justice authorities of provinces, Vientiane Capital as well as the People's Supreme Court (PSC), Office of Supreme People's Prosecutor (OSPP), interrogation-investigation officers of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), officers of Detention Facilities of MPS, District Justice Offices and the National Assembly members; 761 law students of Law School in Vientiane Capital, of whom 46.1 per cent were female; 182 people from 40 villages in 5 districts in Vientiane Capital, of whom 39 per cent were female. The Ministry of Justice in cooperation with MPS, OSPP, PSC, Lao Women's Union, the Secretariat of NCAW and the Petitions Handling Department of the National Assembly has been working on creating a Manual on Access to Justice for Women.

21. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the then International Law Project (ILP) and the Support Project for Implementation of the Legal Sector Master Plan (SPLSMP) and other initiatives (particularly the EU and Australia), has organized a number of TOT sessions on international law and human rights conventions for judicial officials at central and provincial levels in order to enhance their capacity in the implementation of international law at various levels to take into account the obligations under various treaties ensuring that court verdicts and decisions will not contradict the treaties to which the Lao PDR is party. Furthermore, the fore-mentioned projects and initiatives organized international law and human rights training sessions for students of Law schools, the Military School in Champasack Province, the Police Academy in Vientiane Capital.

22. The Lao Government conducted activities to disseminate CEDAW, protection of women's and children's rights through television broadcasts, national radio broadcasts, community loudspeakers, newspapers and various websites. The Government organized celebrations of important commemorative dates, such as International Women's Day, the Anniversary of Lao Women's Union establishment, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. These celebrations have all been publicized through the mass communication channels to appeal to the people on the status of Lao women, adjusting attitudes and behaviours that are adverse to the advancement of women or any acts of violence against women and children. In 2015, the Television broadcasted and newspapers published the Lao President's Statement on the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Lao Women's Union. Since 2011, mass media has also broadcasted and published the Lao Prime Minister's Statement on commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

23. The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism has made efforts to raise awareness and visibility of CEDAW as well as of the human rights of women, violence against women through various activities and the media means in which women journalists actively participated. The number of journalists and news anchors on TV and radio is 676 in total, of whom 35 per cent are women. The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism mainstreams gender into its sector-wide plans to produce media based on the needs and interests of women and girls, safeguard against pornography and promote gender capacity building. These activities of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism also contributed to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action+20 related to women and media.

24. Various development partners, through cooperating with relevant sectors of the government or mass organizations especially the Lao Women's Union have created media on gender equality and prevention of violence against women and children, for example, in 2013 NCAW and NCMC produced a documentary piece on domestic violence with cooperation and support from the Australian Government. In 2014, UNWOMEN jointly with the Ministry of Education and Sports produced a music video with a famous vocal artists to encourage the youth to speak up on violence against women.

25. INGOs such as Care International, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Village Focus International and local CSOs (NPAs), including Gender Development Association (GDA), Association for Development of Women and Legal Education (ADWLE) through various projects have also disseminated CEDAW, as well as laws especially related to women's rights and have produced tools for advocacy, such as posters and pamphlets with illustrations, small plays in ethnic languages to reach out to the ethnic communities, for instance, Akha ethnic group in northern Laos.

Legal complaints mechanisms and human rights institution
CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 13-14

26. The Constitution of the Lao PDR as recently amended in 2015, provides for the right of the Lao people to lodge complaints and petitions in Article 41 "Lao citizens have the right to lodge complaints and petitions and to propose ideas to the relevant State organizations in connection with issues pertaining to the public interest or to their own rights and interests". In addition, in 2015 the Lao PDR has also amended the Law on Handling of Petitions.

27. According to this law, the Lao multi-ethnic people who deem that their rights and freedoms have been violated by acts of State officials or third party may lodge a request, claim and petition for justice through 3 mechanisms:

(1) Requests can be made to the State administrative authority which is composed of the village administration, district authorities, prefectural authorities, provincial authorities, capital authorities, ministries, State and government organizations which have the mandate to receive complaints from citizens or organizations to consider remedying acts of individuals or decisions of organizations that are deemed to be in violation of the laws and regulations, unjust, detrimental to the interests of the State, collectives or rights and legitimate interests of the citizens.

(2) Claims can be presented to the judicial organizations composed of the Office of Supreme People's Prosecutor and the People's Supreme Court and their respective organizational levels. Under the amended Law on the Office of People's Prosecutor 2009, the Prosecutor's Office has the main duty to file criminal cases to the court and also has an important role in facilitating access to and awareness of the legal justice system and inspecting abuse of authority or inappropriate conducts.

(3) Petitions for justice can be presented to the National Assembly (NA), which has the duty to receive petition for justice from the people including cases instigated by women. Especially, during the National Assembly sessions, there is a hot-line set up for the people to express their opinions on various topics for the consideration of the National Assembly.

28. Other than the mechanisms mentioned above, there is also the Government Inspection and Anti-corruption Authority which has been active at central, ministerial and provincial level to inspect the conducts of State employees and receive petitions from the people.

29. The statistics of the registered complaints to the Courts have been recorded and kept by the courts. The complaints relating to criminal cases involving violence against women and children from 2010 to 2013 have been collected by the Department of Technical Management and Court Statistics.

30. Table 4: Types of criminal cases involving violence against women from 2010-2013 attached at the end of this report.

31. In addition to the formal mechanisms there is the Lao Bar Association (LBA) which provides advices on access to justice, represents clients in court proceedings and ensures a just court proceeding. Currently, there are 183 members of the Bar providing free legal aid to the people in need. The LBA has members in many provinces and has conducted more than 1,700 cases of pro bono legal assistance.

Temporary special measures CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 15-16

32. The Lao Government has applied temporary special measures to promote gender into all fields of decision making from the central to grass-roots level in the national development, reflected in the general, sectoral and specific development programmes, strategies and action plans.

33. The VII Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) (2011-2015) emphasizes that:

- At least 20 per cent of core staff must be women;
- 15 per cent of women must be in positions in governmental organizations;
- The number of women parliamentarians to increase to more than 30 per cent;
- The number of women who receive trainings in production techniques, processing, handicraft and service to increase by no less than 20 per cent;
- Social and cultural sectors and enterprises, where women comprise 40 per cent or more of the total workforce, must have women in leadership of their sectors and enterprises;
- 85 per cent of women above 15 years of age must be aware of different social adverse impacts such as trafficking in persons.
- The NCAW has developed the VII Five-year National Strategy for Advancement of Women (2011-2015) which emphasizes that:
- More than 30 per cent of parliamentarians must be women;
- Women to occupy more than 15 per cent of decision-making positions;
- Sectors, where women comprise 40 per cent or more of the total workforce, must have women in leadership of their sectors;
- More than 30 per cent of participants of political and administrative, legal and management trainings must be women.
- The Sub-CAW of Ministry of Home Affairs has developed gender-equality promotion strategy in governance (2012-2015) to ensure the exercise of rights, duties and holistic development with gender equality in governance to support women in active and full participation in tasks with equal rights to men, creating conditions for women to be developed and enhanced in terms of capacity, promoting gender in decision making at each level, further improving mechanism and regulations that promote women's advancement;
- Ministry of Education and Sports has set target in the strategy to promote women's advancement to increase access to school for girls to be equal with

boys in 2015 to achieve 98 per cent at primary education, 75 per cent at lower and upper secondary education, 50 per cent at higher education and university. In addition, women in decision making positions in the Ministry shall increase to at least 1/3 of men.

- Ministry of Health supports and monitors the implementation of mother's, newborn's and child's integrated health care; provision of quality and effective services, mobilization of individuals, families and communities in promoting health and prevention of diseases such as HIV/AIDs, malaria and others; dissemination of gender mainstreaming into health care service for staff of health care facilities, focusing on improvement of women's advancement strategy in the health sector, relating and integrating this task to health projects, sex-disaggregated statistics and promoting more women in decision making positions; issuing the Decree on Supports for Delivery and Treatment of Under-5 to address obstacles to access to health care for mothers and children; implementing free of charge service for birth delivery and treatment of under-5 children across the country.

- Ministry of Public Security developed women's advancement strategy in its sector, analysed sex-disaggregated statistics to create conditions to support women participation in the decision-making of the public security sector;

- Ministry of Public Works and Transport completed women's advancement strategy for the sector (2014-2025), setting targets to have 30 per cent of its staff who are women and 15 per cent of decision making positions to be occupied by women and 30 per cent of participants at trainings must also be women; the action plan to mainstream gender in the running water project in small towns supported by ADB with the target to increase women staff and leaders by 10 per cent after the project ends and 30 per cent of funding for capacity enhancement must be allocated to women. At the same time, this project also has set target to have 30 per cent of Village Water and Sanitation Committee members and project staff who are women;

- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry set targets by 2015 to increase women technical staff in trainings of the sector up to 35 per cent, facilitate and increase number of farmers and poor families to participate in activities and trainings to reach 45 per cent, increase number of women in decision making positions to reach more than 15 per cent, create conditions for target women to become public servants at each level from the central to grass-roots level to reach 30 per cent each year and increase ethnic women to study at Agriculture and Forestry Faculties to reach more than 30 per cent. In addition, the staff of Sub-CAW of MAF have developed guidelines and regulations for women's advancement, for gender mainstreaming into planning, monitoring and evaluation of the sector;

- Ministry of Energy and Mines, in collaboration with the ministerial women's union, collected sex-disaggregated statistics on positions and needs for women's development. In addition, the ministry also creates conditions for female public servants to be in decision making positions such as nomination of women in the list of prospective future leaders, allocate budget and seek funds for training to enhance capacity of women on different topics such as leadership, public speaking, project proposal writing, gender mainstreaming into the sectoral plan and other plans.

34. In addition, development partners, INGOs also implemented their gender equality strategy, action plans, and projects such as the project on improving living conditions of ethnic communities in Phaoudom District, Bokeo Province which is supported by NCA. This project set target for 50 per cent gender balance of

participants in decision making meetings on project support and implementation at village level and set target to have 30 per cent of women participants in skills development and other trainings.

35. The Government has adopted temporary special measures to enable women to better enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights.

36. The Lao PDR is classified as one of the least developed countries. Many people in the country still live in poverty, including women. Poverty remains a huge obstacle to many areas of development in the Lao PDR, therefore, the government has strongly urged all sectors to emphasize on improving better living conditions and eradicating poverty for the multi-ethnic people by creating special measures to facilitate people who live in difficult conditions, especially women to have equal opportunity to have a better living conditions and break through poverty by themselves. In this connection, the Lao Women's Union Centre organized skills training for women, such as short term vocational training on various topics to enhance labour skills for women living in poverty to provide them with opportunities to get employment and generate income. The training sessions were attended by 7,373 participants, of whom 7,239 were female from 68 "3 builds" villages. Another temporary measure to help women earn more income is the campaign for women to set up Village Saving Schemes and Solidarity/Collective Fund which can be used for securing loans for women to run SMEs and build their family economy, promote education, eradicate poverty. The project is running in 16 provinces and Vientiane Capital with total of 3,453 saving groups and 258,843 members. Furthermore, the Micro Fund/Finance Scheme which collects deposits for women and family development has been set up in Vientiane Capital, Vientiane and Bolikhamxay Provinces with the total of 7 branches and 5,250 members, and the total savings of 4,527,000,000 Kips. The Micro Fund Scheme is prioritized for creating conditions for the children, both boys and girls, to be enrolled in school according to their age. The target group for this project is the people aged between 15-45 years old. The project was able to eradicate illiteracy for 942,018 people, of whom 527,898 were female.[3]

37. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry organized trainings/seminars on agricultural techniques to enhance the production skills to generate household income, in which the participation of women technicians achieved 35.7 per cent which is 0.7 per cent higher than estimated. The Ministry also campaigned for farmers to engage in SMEs through crops, livestock and mixed farming production in 3,351 villages with the total of 6,879 groups with 45,872 members of whom 25,492 or 56 per cent were female. Women occupied 16 per cent of the farming group committees' membership which is an increase from 8 per cent in previous years.[4]

38. The Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) of the Steering Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction has created enabling conditions for farmers in poor areas to secure loans from the PRF, bank credits with low interest rates and the government grants for production, such as crops, livestock and fishery in total of 2,366 villages, 7,187 groups, 71,373 families, totalling 356,865 persons of whom 182,012 were women (51 per cent) and number of women who were group committee members were 1,086 (15.1 per cent).

[3] Lao Women's Union's General Meeting VII report, 20-21 October 2011, page 24-25.

[4] Vision for 2030, National Gender Equality Strategic Plan (2016-2015) and the Five Year National Action Plan III, page 9.

National machinery for advancement of women CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 17-18

39. In the implementation of Concluding Observations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action relating to the institutional mechanism for the advancement of women, the Lao PDR has made significant following progress.

40. The Lao PDR attaches importance to the development and promotion of the advancement of women and has made progress on those fronts by further implementing the 3 pillars of women's empowerment.

41. The Lao Women's Union was established in 1955 to protect the legitimate rights and benefits of Lao women and has made significant contributions towards the advancement of women, promotion and protection of women's rights and benefits in society.

42. The Lao Women's Union is a mass organization with organizational structure at all levels such as at the central, ministerial/organization/provincial level, district and village level. LWU implements policy, strategies and guidance of the government to ensure gender equality and protects the rights of women and children. The Law on Lao Women's Union of 2013 defines mandate, rights and duties of LWU as follows:

- Article 8: LWU is mandated to represent women in the development and the protection of the rights and interests of members of LWU, women and children, to educate, mobilize, encourage ownership of Lao women and promote gender equality, preserve and promote fine traditions of Lao women of all ethnic groups, encourage women to participate in national defence and development.
- Article 9: LWU has the rights and duties to make research with a view to developing strategies pertaining to development, protection of rights and legitimate interests of women, promoting women's advancement and gender equality to propose to the Nation-wide Women's Conference for approval; to educate LWU members and Lao women of all ethnic groups to be patriotic and to uphold their dignity as well as to preserve and promote fine traditions and customs of the country, of localities and of the ethnic groups and the unique traditional characteristics of Lao women; to mobilize women to participate in implementation of policy, laws, socio-economic development plan and resolutions of Women's Nation-Wide Conference; to protect rights and legitimate interests of LWU members and women of all ethnic groups within its responsibility; to comment on policies, regulations, laws, socio-economic development and State budget, especially on the issues related to women and children.

43. The National Commission for the Advancement of Women is inter-agency mechanism with an advisory role to the government on supporting the advancement of women, gender equality, empower women and acts as the focal point to coordinate, monitor, gather information, draft and present the national reports under the CEDAW as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The NCAW has continued to further improve its organization within various sectors of the government at central and local level to be more effective through awareness training sessions on the convention and appoint its focal points within the ministries and sectors to implement the obligations of the Lao PDR under CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the MDGs, especially MDG 3: promote gender equality and empower women integrated into their respective organization's work plan as well as budget plan to support activities promoting gender equality in accordance with the amended Law on National Budget 2015

which facilitates budget allocation for such activities. Specifically, the NCAW has been converted to budget unit level 1 to ensure sufficient funding for implementing and achieving their respective work plans and goals in promoting advancement of women and gender equality.

44. The NCAW Secretariat, with State-budget allocation and some funding supports for its activities from UNFPA, UNWOMEN, INGOs active in gender related activities and other development partners, organized different events and advocacy campaigns for behaviour change and awareness raising on the importance of women empowerment, providing equal opportunities to women in all fields of their life, which includes economic, political fields and access to all services. In mid-2014, Lao NCAW Secretariat organized consultation meeting for the first draft of III 5-year Strategy for Women's Advancement (2016-2020). The Secretariat also participated in the regional and international arenas related to gender equality and combating violence against women and children, especially, ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children(ACWC); Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +20.

45. The NA Women's Caucus was established in 2010 to oversee and support strategy, women's advancement and development implementation, the participation of women in socio-economic development, implementation of MDGs and CEDAW; collect information on women in decision making positions at each level; disseminate the mandate, rights and duties of parliamentarians of VII Legislature; and obtain comments and suggestions of citizens, local administrations to present to concerned organizations for consideration to remedy. More information on the workplan, guidelines and activities of the NA Women's Caucus are reported under Article 1-4 of this report (The National Assembly).

46. All 3 mechanisms: Lao NCAW, NA Women's and LWU have critical roles in supporting the advancement of women and all 3 national level organizations have made great efforts to carry out their mandates contributing towards the advancement and protection of women within their respective duties and responsibilities while also cooperating and coordinating with one another in complementary manners.

National human rights institution

47. Despite the fact that the Lao PDR is has not established a national human rights institution based on the Paris Principles, the Lao PDR has set up national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights and for coordination in the implementation of the obligations under the human rights treaties and protocols to which the Lao PDR is party. These mechanisms include the National Steering Committee on Human Rights, the National Commission for the Advancement of Women and Mother-Child, National Committee on Anti-Human Trafficking, National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons. In addition, there are other organizations contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights in the Lao PDR such as the Lao Front for National Construction, the Lao Women's Union, the Lao Youth Union, the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Lao Bar Association, the Lao Disabled People's Associations, several Non-Profits Associations.

Ratification of other treaties CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 57

48. The Lao PDR is the party to 7 UN core human rights treaties and 2 optional protocols, which include the following:

1. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

3. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

5. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

6. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

7. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

49. The Lao PDR has ratified ILO Conventions number 4, 6, 13, 29, 100, 111, 138, 182, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially the Women and Children, which supplements to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime also ratified by the Lao PDR. In general, the provisions in human rights treaties have been integrated into the Lao PDR's domestic laws and regulations.

50. In addition, the Lao PDR has signed the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, Vientiane Declaration on Enhancing Gender Perspective and ASEAN Women's Partnership for Environmental Sustainability, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children, ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection.

Non-Governmental Organizations CEDAW/C/LAO/CO7, Para 19-20

51. The Government of the Lao PDR has always attached importance to the involvement of INGOs, local CSOs (NPAs) on supporting of gender equality. The government has issued regulations as reference for their activities, namely, Decree 115/PMO, dated 29 April 2009 on Non-Profit Associations which prescribes principles and regulations on establishment, activities and management of associations, which are legal persons in the Lao PDR. The Department of State Management and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) is currently in the process of amending the Decree in order to better facilitate the establishment and activities of non-profit associations. In 2014, there were a total of 68 NPAs in the Lao PDR of which 13 NPAs working on gender equality including Gender Development Association (GDA), Association for Development of Women and Legal Education (ADWLE), Community Association Mobilizing Knowledge in Development (CAMKID), Association MeaYing HuamJai Patthana (MHP) or Women Mobilizing for Development, Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre (LDWDC).

Article 5: Stereotypes and cultural practices CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 21-22

52. The Lao population is composed of 49 ethnic groups which have different cultural traditions and practices especially the ethnic groups that reside in remote areas with difficult access to education still practice their ancient local beliefs or customs that may put women's and children's rights at risks of violation. In this regard, the Government of the Lao PDR attaches importance to combating violence against women and discouraging the negative attitudes and beliefs as an excuse for

committing violence against women and children, eradicating the still somehow existing stereotypes and negative cultural practices that lead to violence against women and children. The Lao Government has employed all possible measures to encourage ethnic communities to discontinue their stereotypes, negative ancient beliefs and practices. In December 2014 the National Assembly adopted the Law on Preventing and Combatting of Violence Against Women and Children. Article 27 of the Law states that "men have responsibilities and shall take ownership in preventing violence against women and children, adapt-change the violence behaviour and stop using violence, have a good attitude, respect the rights of individual women and children, aware of and implement their duty in realizing gender equality, women's and children's rights. In addition men should not hold customs, traditions or beliefs to justify violence against women and children"

53. In 2011, the University of Health Science of the Lao PDR in cooperation with Karolinska Institute from Sweden has conducted a research on customary adolescent sexual practices amongst the Akha Youth of northern Lao PDR, the purpose was to study the understanding of the Akha ethnic group. The research concluded that the Akha ethnic group should be included in strategic health plan without violation of their culture and dignity, instead, assist them in preventing violations and health threats that may occur. The fore- mentioned strategic plan may include sex education, among others.

54. Regarding this issue, Long District authorities in northern Laos cooperated with NCA to create awareness amongst the Akha community on the health effects of the negative practices. The project helped establish the Village Child Protection Committee, created peer to peer groups and disseminated CEDAW, treaties relating to the rights of the child to the Akha community in Long District. Furthermore, the LWU of Long district, with the support from the Post-Graduate Faculty of the University of Health Science, has set up a counselling centre to provide services to ethnic women.

Violence against women CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 23-24

55. The elimination of violence of women and children by citing customary traditions as excuses has progressed thanks to the implementation of combating violence against women and children policy, promotion of women's rights as one of the priorities of the Government of the Lao PDR demonstrated in its commitment to CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other treaties as well as through making and adopting laws and measures aimed at protecting women's benefits and prevent violence against women and children of all ethnic groups.

56. The Government of the Lao PDR issued the Decree No. 167/PMO, dated 15 May 2014 to endorse the National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children (2014-2020) which is composed of 3 action plans:

- The plan to review policies and legislations, create database and studies, and capacity building.
- The plan to prevent violence against women and children.
- The plan to remedy violence against women and children.

57. In December 2014, the National Assembly adopted the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children, particularly:

- Article 24 to 27 stipulates the responsibilities of various organizations in society, family members, both women and men.

- Article 27 urges men to have responsibilities and take ownership in preventing violence against women and children, adapt-change the violence behaviour and stop using violence, have a good attitude, respect the rights of women and children, aware of and implement the duties in realizing gender equality, women's and children's rights. In addition, men should not hold customs, traditions or beliefs to justify violence against women and children.

- Article 61 assigns the LWU and NCAW as directly responsible organizations to take lead as focal points in coordinating with the NCMC and ministries concerned such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Justice and local authorities concerned in the implementation.

58. In the government's brief report on paragraph 24 of the Concluding Observation submitted to the CEDAW Committee in 2013, the Government provided information on specific measures to address all forms of violence against women and children, as follows:

- The Lao PDR has organized, for the first time, the celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November 2011 with the Prime Minister's statement publicized through newspapers, radio and television. The PM's statement reads "to ensure more successful and productive implementation of protecting women and children, in future ahead, the main issue is to break through in terms of imagination/mindset to move on and break away from the old stereotypes and complacency which saw violence against women and children in society as a nonissue to new imagination/mindset for society to acknowledge and realize gender equality as an inclusive society where both men and women jointly contribute to development, livelihood and activities with dignity according to the national laws and regulations that prohibit violence against women". In addition, the President of the National Assembly led the walk to raise awareness on Anti-violence against Women and Children. The participation of high ranking officers of the Lao PDR in the Anti-violence against women and children campaigns have high effects and influence in the Lao society, rallying for a change of perspective towards violence against women and children.

- Seminars were organized on the topic of "Ending Violence Against Women and Children" attended by Sub-CAWs, line ministries, organizations, Vientiane Capital authorities, development partners and INGOs with total of 194 participants, including 67 women.

- Seminars were organized on combating violence against women and children for judicial officials, police officers, people's court officials and people's prosecutors at central level and 5 provinces: Vientiane, Bolikhamxay, Khammuane, Savannakhet and Vientiane Capital, with 172 participants, of whom 108 were women.

- Seminars were organized on combating violence against women and children for Sub-CAW members and the Advancement of Women Division of the Ministry of Education and Sports, teachers and students from various schools in Vientiane Capital with 63 participants, including 38 women.

- The Government has granted approval for NCAW to raise a patriotism and development campaign to help build development families, development villages and development districts attached with the promotion for gender equality and absence of domestic violence especially against women and children. Through the fore-mentioned campaign, NCAW has rolled out

advocacy on violence against women and children at grass-root level by proposing to the government to adopt gender equality and absence of domestic violence especially against women and children as one of the standards for development and poverty reduction (2011-2015).

- NCAW also has a nationwide consultation campaigns and jointly with development partners to develop the National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children (2014-2020); furthermore, it has also participated in the drafting process of the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women Children.
- NCAW has collaborated with the National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning and Investment to conduct studies on violence against women with topic of "National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experience in the Lao PDR".
- NCMC has also collaborated with the National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Planning and Investment in conducting studies on violence against children.
- The Government has collaborated with various development partners on gender equality especially for women of disadvantaged ethnic groups in remote areas. In cooperation with development partners, both bilaterally and multilaterally, the Government has created various strategic plans and legislations, namely, in 2012 UNWOMEN has supported the review of legislations in the Lao PDR on anti-violence against women and a research on the justice system, customary laws concerning women in 3 provinces of Lao PDR. In the second semester of 2015, UNWOMEN has supported a study on estimation of resources and human resources required to provide services to women and children who are victims of violence in the Lao PDR.
- Lao PDR has actively participated in campaign to combat violence against women and children in the ASEAN region, as well as the South to South Cooperation and other international cooperative frameworks.

59. At the grass-root level, the local authorities and provincial and district mass organizations cooperated with INGOs and local CSOs (NPAs) to bring about the change in behaviour and attitude towards violence against women and children, gender equality and women empowerment, for example:

- In Bokeo province, the MHP association has provided training for technical officials at district level in 5 districts on utilizing tools and practical lessons on promoting gender equality and empowerment in various villages in their respective districts.
- NCA collaborated with the district local authorities and utilized the participatory methods of learning and practices incorporated into their social customs monitoring and evaluation plans in 18 Akha villages, in Long District. This project was aiming at raising the sense of ownership for both men and women of the community to come up with their own plans and solutions.
- CARE International's action plan targeted women of ethnic groups in remote areas, preparing them to handle effects of natural disasters as well as climate change.

60. In order to design suitable activities for combating violence against women, NCAW in collaboration with the National Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Planning and Investment conducted a national survey on violence against women entitled "Health and Women life experiences in Lao PDR". This study has been a reference key initiatives to combat violence against women: 1) Combined 8th and

9th National Report on the CEDAW Implementation in Lao PDR, 2) making of the Law on Combating and Preventing Violence Against Women and Children, 3) National Action Plan for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children in Lao PDR, and 4) campaign to raise awareness and change traditional discriminating perception leading to violence against women.[5]

Definition of rape in the law CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 26

61. The Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children has several articles concerning definition of rape.

62. Article 4 defines 2 types of rape: forced sex and rape.

- Forced sex within marriage means any act by a husband to have sexual intercourse with his wife by using force, coercion, threats when the wife does not want to have sex or is in situation when she is not ready to have sex.
- Rape means the use of force, use of a weapon to threaten, use of anaesthesia drug, use of alcohol or other methods that place women and children in situation that they cannot help themselves, to have sexual relations with women and children.

63. Article 15 defines sexual violence as an act or attempt to act that results in harm to the sexual rights of women and children such as rape, forced sex, any act of obscenity, sexually indecent assault, unwanted sexual comments or sexual touching; or sending of women or children to another person for sexual purposes.

64. Article 17 Para 5 stipulates that forced sex and rape are considered as violence against women and children.

65. Article 79 stipulates that any individual who forces his own wife to have sex will be imprisoned from three months to one year or punished without deprivation of liberty and will be fined from 300,000 Kip to 1,000,000 Kip. In cases where forced sex caused serious injury the punishment will be one year to five years imprisonment and will be fined from 1,000,000 Kip to 5,000,000 Kip. The amount of the fines mentioned matches with the amount provided in Article 128 of the Criminal Law which prescribes punishment for rape offenses.

Article 6: Anti-trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

Trafficking CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 27-28

66. The Government of Lao PDR emphasizes the importance of combating anti-trafficking and exploitation of women and children including for the purpose of child labour and prostitution of women and children and thus has established the National Steering Committee on Anti-human Trafficking in 2011 whose members include high ranking officials from related ministries and agencies, including the Central LWU which is responsible for the protection and promotion of women's rights and empowerment. The Secretariat to the National Steering Committee on Anti-human Trafficking is located at the Ministry of Public Security.

67. In the Year 2011, the Minister of Public Security has issued the Decision No. 1240/MPS, dated 5 October 2011 on the Establishment of the Prevention and Anti-Trafficking Department within the General Police Department and the Prevention and Anti-Trafficking Divisions within Vientiane Capital and provincial Police Department across the country. The Department and these Divisions are the administrative organizations for the National Steering Committee on Human

[5] Activities to eradicate violence against women of Lao NCAW.

Trafficking to implement the tasks of preventing and combating trafficking in persons countrywide, particularly through prosecution of trafficking in persons, violence against women and children, adultery, families and customs as outlined in the laws.

68. The Government in 2012 adopted the National Plan of Action on Human Trafficking (2013-2015). In 2014, the Government began drafting a Law on Anti-Human Trafficking. In preparing the draft law, 7 workshops on the assessment of related laws on trafficking in persons were organized with local and international experts. In 2015, the draft law on Anti-Human trafficking was adopted by the National Assembly and promulgated by the President of the Lao PDR. In addition to basing on this Law, the prosecution of human trafficking cases is also based on Article 134 of the Law on Development and Protection of Women, and the Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children.

69. The Government of the Lao PDR has guaranteed the benefits of the children by adopting and implementing the National Strategic and Action Plan on Women and Children 2011-2015, the National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children (2014-2020), the Plan on Elimination of Child Labour in the Lao PDR 2014-2020. The adoption and promulgation of the Law on Juvenile Justice is a guarantee for protection of the rights of the child in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

70. The Government of the Lao PDR has taken part in bilateral and multilateral anti-human trafficking efforts, particularly in the ASEAN framework, the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) and the Bali Process. Bilateral cooperation has been enforced with the following MOUs:

- The MOU on Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children between Lao PDR and Thailand was signed on 13 July 2005.
- The MOU on Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons and Protection of Victims of Trafficking between Lao PDR and Vietnam was signed on 3 November 2010.
- The MOU between Laos and the People's Republic of China was signed on 1 September 2014.

71. The Lao PDR has paid attention to capacity building of staff in concerned agencies such as integrating the work on trafficking in persons into university and college curriculums, the Public Security Academy, providing training, and improving knowledge on trafficking in persons to local administration, front-line officers, border patrol officers particularly immigration officers. It is to create better understanding and fair treatment of victims of trafficking in persons from repatriation without penalties and prosecution.

72. In 2014 the Secretariat of the Steering Committee on Human Trafficking has conducted a survey on labour migration and other high risk groups in 3 northern provinces namely: Houaphanh, Xiengkhouang and Luang Prabang and the survey has extended to other southern provinces.

73. In the past, the law enforcement agencies have actively taken part to prosecute trafficking offenders and assisted a large number of victims of human trafficking as demonstrated from 2008 to 2012. 177 human trafficking cases were brought to trial with 231 offenders, of whom 145 female; number of victims were 422, of whom

161 female; 271 victims were under the age of 18 including 161 girls. In 2011-2012, the courts heard 66 cases[6] of human trafficking.

74. Since 2008 to March 2013 the relevant actors had provided assistance to victims of human trafficking, such as Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare had received victims who had been officially repatriated in the total of 946 persons including 891 women; 769 of them were under the age of 18 including 714 girls. The Centre for Counselling and Protection of Women and Children had provided assistance to the victims and those at risks of human trafficking in the country in the total of 111 persons, of whom 109 were female, 83 of them were under the age of 18. Furthermore, the centre also provided legal advices, psychological and physical health advices all free of charge to the women and children both face to face and via a hotline (Tel. 1362) in the total of 32,257 persons, including 23,164 women; 11,474 of victims were below 18 years of age; a total of 8,523 cases had been reported and the centre provided counselling services to the total of 49,087 times.[7]

75. The Government of the Lao PDR has attached great importance to raising awareness among the relevant authorities on implementing the Law on Anti-human Trafficking through allocating state budget for organizing seminars to disseminate international instruments relating to anti-human trafficking for police authorities, judicial organizations and officials in other sectors to ensure successful implementation of the anti-trafficking in persons efforts.

76. In October 2015, the Department of Treaties and Law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the support from the EU organized a seminar on anti-trafficking from the human rights perspective which was attended by relevant government officials, mass organizations and CSOs, with total of 90 attendees and international experts.

77. The Central Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union has organized a meeting to exchange lessons learned on anti-human trafficking at the Fifth National Youth and Young Pioneers Assembly in 2015, with the attendance of 82 youths including 37 females from 9 provinces.

Exploitation of prostitution CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 30

78. The Law of the Lao PDR does not allow prostitution as a profession and sex trade is a criminal offense in the Lao PDR. However, in practice, there are still individuals who covertly provide sexual service which according to an estimation the number of service women in the Lao PDR is 11,000 persons[8] which is relatively close to the information that the National Aids Prevention Centre has gathered from various provinces participating in the prevention of AIDS program in 2014 which was supported by Global Fund under the supervision of the Ministry of Health as demonstrated in Table 6. Therefore, the measures adopted by the Government of the Lao PDR to prevent sex trade are to strengthen the implementation of the law, education by families, local authorities and mass organizations.

79. CARE International in cooperation with the Sub-CAW of Vientiane Capital has conducted a study on the risks of abuse and exploitation of service women in Vientiane Capital. It analysed the living situation and the work of service women, accessed the risks of abuse and exploitation of service women and explored post-trauma assistance for service women. The study has used peer support groups to conduct fieldwork. Key findings demonstrate that service women in general are

[6] The Concluding Activity Report of the Secretariat to the National Steering Committee on Anti-human Trafficking 2012-2013. Number 081/NSCAT S. 24 October 2013.

[7] The Concluding Activity Report of the Secretariat to the National Steering Committee on Anti-human Trafficking 2012-2013. Number 081/NSCAT S. 24 October 2013.

[8] Gender Assessment of National HIV Response in the Lao PDR. October 2013.

found in beer bars, pubs and entertainment locations. The study links strong correlations to poverty and migration of prospective service women from remote areas.

Article 7: Elimination of discrimination against women in the political and public life

Participation in political and public life CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 31-32

80. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action have outline that at least 30 per cent of power and decision making positions should compose women. The Lao Government has paid attention to the promotion of women's participation in decision making at all levels in the society. The government pursues the policy to focus efforts on preventing and resolving a few social problems including gender inequality, domestic violence, human trafficking and other issues. The Government pays attention to comprehensive development of young officials, female officials, officials from ethnic groups. The Government of the Lao PDR has set targets of the VII National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) to include: (1) At least 20 per cent of government officials should be female; (2) 15 per cent of management positions in state and mass organizations should reserve for women; and (3) Female members of the National Assembly should exceed 30 per cent.

81. Women play an important role in the nation's political life. In 2012, the proportion of female members of the National Assembly VII Legislature was 33 out of the 132 total members or 25 per cent. Women occupied the positions of Cabinet Minister 10.7 per cent, Deputy Minister 10.6 per cent, Assistant Minister 17 per cent, Director-General 16.2 per cent, Deputy Director General 19.5 per cent, Ambassador and Consul-General 12.8 per cent, Division Director 65.9 per cent, Deputy Division Director 38.5 per cent. At the provincial and local levels, women occupied the position of Deputy Provincial Governor 8 per cent, District Mayor 6 per cent and Village Chief 2.6 per cent.[9]

82. According to information from the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2015, there were a total of 177,626 state employees, of which 79,662 or 44.8 per cent of them were women.

83. Women are proportionately represented in the Lao PDR justice system. Female officers comprise 38 per cent of 641 officers in the Ministry of Justice. However, female officers in district justice divisions only accounts for 26.9 per cent of 884 district justice officials. Although the number of justice officers has increased in 2014, the percentage of female representation still stayed at 27 per cent at the district level and 39 per cent at the provincial level. The Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor has a total of 1,617 government officers, of whom 33.7 per cent are female. The Lao Bar Association has 187 lawyers, 44 of whom are 23.5 per cent are female. Female lawyers have actively implemented the work of the Lao Bar Association and advocated for behavioural change and other legislation appropriate for women. In the Ministry of Public Security in 2014. The number of female officers appointed to management positions of the Ministry was 422 persons or 28.7 per cent. It is an increase of 108 persons or 5.09 per cent compared to 2010 which had only 314 persons or 23.6 per cent.

84. A group of business leaders in the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry consists of 190 members, of whom 44 were female, equivalent to 23 per cent.

[9] Department of Governance Development, Ministry of Home Affairs 2013.

85. The number of local female staff working in international organizations, such as UN agencies, financial institutions, foreign embassies and international non-government organizations accounts to 2/3 of the total number of local staff.

86. The World Bank survey conducted in 2012 on Enterprises of all sizes in Lao PDR has found that 31.8 per cent of those enterprises have women in their executive committees, in small enterprises (with 1-19 employees) 44.3 per cent of them have female leaders, medium enterprises (20-99 employees) with 16.5 per cent female leaders and big enterprises (100 or more employees) there were 5.1 per cent

Article 8: Representation and participation at international level

87. The LWU has continued to cooperate with women's organizations of other countries and international organizations; fulfils its obligations in participating in the annual meetings of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), hosted the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW) in 2012, adopted the Vientiane Declaration on "Enhancing Gender Perspective and ASEAN Women's Partnership for Environmental Sustainability".

88. In 2014-2015 period, the number of Lao diplomats serving in the Lao PDR missions abroad was 230 of whom 19 per cent were women. The number of Ambassadors and Consul-General were 39 of whom 5 were women.

Article 10: Education CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 33-34

89. The government of the Lao PDR continued to reform the national education system with the goal of supporting the development of national human resources with more productivity and create opportunities for the multi-ethnic people including women and men in the urban and rural areas to have access to education at various levels and to support the participation of private education sector. Each year, the Ministry of Education and Sports issues ministerial orders and recommendations on allocation of students at various education levels with priorities for women and the disadvantaged to learn in various sectors according to the actual demands for socio-economic development. In order to provide equal access to education for all, especially for women and girls, the government has laid out main legislations, policies, strategic plans, action plans and projects such as:

- Prime Minister's Decree No. 69/PMO, in 2005, on Adoption and Promulgation of the National Action Plan on Education for All 2003-2015 with four main priorities: supervision and development of children in the ages of learning, primary education, secondary education, external education and skills training.
- Decree No. 100/PMO, in 2009, on Adoption and Promulgation on Education Sector Development Criteria which was the main policy and strategic document on development of the education sector with which the Government of the Lao PDR has shown its intention in terms of policy, strategy and obligations of investing in education to achieve the targets of the National Action Plan on Education for All 2003-2015.
- Decree No. 509/PMO in 2010 on the Promulgation of the National Policy on Education to reduce and eliminate gaps on accessibility and graduation rate of the disadvantaged groups, especially young girls, women, ethnic groups, persons with disabilities with attention to specific and different needs of all learners.

- Order and Recommendation No. 1203/MES.PA.09 by the Minister of Education and Sports on continuous promotion in school to reduce repetition and drop-out rates.
- Order and Recommendation No. 1293/MES, 2012, by the Minister of Education and Sports on Elimination of Education Fees for Preschools, Primary Schools and Secondary schools (both lower and upper) to reduce parents' expenditures on their children's education.
- Order and Recommendation No. 155/MES in 2015, by the Minister of Education and Sports on the Process of National Education Reform Phase II (2011-2015) with the main purpose of reforming vocational education, higher education and pedagogy studies.
- Ministerial Decision by the Minister of Education and Sports No. 1679/MES in 2014 on Policy on promoting School Lunch. This policy aims to promote proper nutrition, attendance rate and graduation rates, reduce repetition rate and dropout rate from preschool to secondary education level in the rural and remote areas and areas with mal-nutrition problems, low attendance rate, high repetition and dropout rate,.
- Cooperation with many development partners, including INGOs to implement various work plans and education service development projects, especially for children with difficult access to education. For instance, the government cooperated with the World Bank (WB) to mobilize the National Action Plan on School Meals in 2012; cooperated with the Asia Development Bank (ADB) in 2011-2015 to provide subsidies for vocational education and has set a minimum of 25 per cent of recipients must be women and 20 per cent must be from ethnic groups; cooperated with the governments of Germany and Switzerland in 2013-2017 to provide vocational scholarships for disadvantaged children such as young girls and dropout students to return to schools and achieve official certificates and other projects.

90. Since 2011, Government of the Lao PDR has set priorities on expanding the education network (invested in construction of schools, recruitment of teachers), such as in 2014, number of primary schools have increased to 77.2 per cent from the previous 65 per cent in 2011; in 2014 the number of teachers has increased by 10 per cent, compared to 2011[10] (from 33,576 to 36,938 teachers).

91. The budget in the education and sports sector had gradually increased in 2012-2013. The National Assembly approved the budget for the sector at 17 per cent of the government's budget and 4.47 per cent of the GDP, which provided administrative funds for schools as per unit value of preschool level, secondary school (lower and higher) at 20,000 Kip/person/year and primary school level at 50,000 Kip/person/year as well as provided support for educational equipment, books, text books and teacher's manuals.[11] Even though the allocation of the state budget for the education sector did not seem to have increased substantially, however, the actual funding for education has increased greatly.

92. The Lao PDR made progress related to MDG2 (Achieve Universal Primary Education), reflected through the indicators such as net enrolment rate in primary education, survival rate to Grade 5 of primary education, gross enrolment rate in lower secondary education, gross enrolment rate in upper secondary education and index for gender equality between boys and girls at ages 3-5. With regard to

[10] Education Statistics Centre, Ministry of Education and Sports.

[11] Resolution of the Plenary Session VIII of the National Commission on National Education Reform 2014.

pre-school and primary education, gender equality would be achieved by 2015. A big gap will still remain however on gender equality at higher education.[12]

93. In 2014-2015, the net enrolment rate in primary education reached 98,5 per cent (98,3 per cent for girls and 98,8 per cent for boys) compared to the target set at 98,0 per cent. The survival rate to Grade 5 of primary education was 78,3 per cent (80,0 per cent for girls and 76,8 per cent for boys) compared to the target set at 95,0 per cent. Most importantly, in each batch there has been a progressive increase in the amount of girls reaching Grade 5. The gross enrolment rate in lower secondary school was 78,1 per cent (76,0 per cent for girls and 80,2 per cent for boys) compared to the target set at 76,0 per cent. The gross enrolment rate in upper secondary schools reached 48,6 per cent (45,8 per cent for girls and 42,9 per cent for boys) in 2014-2015, compared to the target set at 43,0 per cent.[13]

94. In 2014-2015, the number of students enrolled in public vocational schools at certificate level was 18.236 (30,0 per cent women), the number of students enrolled in public vocational schools at diploma level was 31.193 (45,3 per cent women) and the number of students enrolled in private poly-technique and vocational schools was 457 (22,8 per cent women).[14] The number of Bachelor's degree students at public colleges in the academic year 2014-2015 was 42.723 (42,9 per cent women), the number of Master's Degree students at public colleges was 1.244 (37,0 per cent women) and the number of PhD students was 22 (40,9 per cent women).[15]

95. The literacy rate in the 25-49 age group is 69 per cent for women and 77 per cent for men. However, this rate varies greatly from region to region. For example, the rate corresponds to 55 per cent women / 70 per cent men in the southern region but 76 per cent women / 79 per cent men in the central region. It is worth noticing that literacy rates are higher among younger age groups and the index of equality between girls and boys in primary and secondary education levels is almost the same.[16] In the year 2011-2012 the Lao Social Indicator Survey tested literacy rates by giving short and simple sentences to people with primary or lower education levels.

96. The figures on MDGs achievement and the budget allocation for the period of 2012-2013 by the government to the education and sports sector has been summarized on table 2 of the Appendices of this report.

Article 11: Employment

Labour workers CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 35-36

97. In the implementation of this Concluding Observation and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action+20 related to women and economy, the Lao PDR has achieved the following progress:

98. According to the survey on labour force and child labour in 2010 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare jointly conducted with the National Statistics Bureau, across the Lao PDR there were a total of 3,079,852 active labour force, of which 98.1 per cent are employed; from the employed labour force 49.8 per cent of them were women; 80 per cent of the total labour force are in the agriculture sector while industrial and service sector took up 20 per cent. In any case, the labour structure has changed reflecting the market economy and there were migration of

[12] Report on Assessment and Development of Education Sector 2011-2015, 18 December 2013.
[13] Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Information System.
[14] Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Information System.
[15] Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Information System.
[16] LSIS 2011-2012, Lao Statistics Bureau.

labour from rural to urban areas. The textile industry is a sector with many female labour force but due to present conditions of such work are not so attractive and thus allocation of labour to this industry has decreased.[17] In order to guarantee equal employment opportunities for women in the labour market and to improve the working conditions for women in various factories including textile factories, the Government of the Lao PDR has done the following:

- Adopted and Promulgated the Amended Law on Labour.[18]
- Adopted and Promulgated the Strategic Plan on Labour Development[19] and Strategic Plan on Social Welfare Development for the period 2011-2020.[20]
- Issued a Decree on minimum wages for workers in business enterprises, manufacturing and services sectors and a Notification on improving the minimum wages in February 2015.[21]
- Issued a Decree on Building and Developing Skilled Labour; up to now there are 163 technical and vocational training centres across the nation, of which 60 centres were under government management; 60 centres were under private and business sector, 13 centres were under mass organizations; this includes the technical and skills training ran by the LWU, 90 centres were managed by the private manufacturing sector, all them have in place a training curriculum that suits the market's demands.
- Issued a Decision by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare on Organization and Functions of the Labour Inspection Officials
- Adopted the National Action Plan on implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (2011-2015) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- Adopted the Decree 70/PMO on Public Social Security Scheme, Decree 343/PMO and issued a Recommendation on the Implementation of Decree No. 70/PMO and Decree 343/PMO.

99. The Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) has the role to protect the legitimate rights and interests of its members both men and women and multi-ethnic labourers.

100. The Amended Labour Law 2013 stipulates the various rights of labourers, such as receive days-off as defined by the government, take leave for personal matters (3 days) without pay deduction; create internal regulations within work unit; terminate employment; receive extra pay for working during weekends and public holidays; equal rights for women in any profession sectors such as manufacturing, business and services, participation in trainings and receive equal salaries or payment as their male peers. This law has also prescribed conditions on employment of youth labour under 18 years of age and protection from work accidents and ensuring labourers' health.

101. In 2013, the Gender Development Association has conducted a survey on baseline information regarding social responsibility of 9 textile factories in Vientiane Capital including large factories (with more than 500 labourers), medium

[17] The survey on labour force and child labour in 2010 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare jointly with the National Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Planning and Investment.

[18] National Assembly adopted on 24 December 2013 and Promulgated on 28 January 2014 by the President of Lao PDR.

[19] Prime Minister's Decree No. 236/PMO, 7 May 2010.

[20] Prime Minister's Decree No. 232/PMO, 30 May 2010.

[21] Notice of Recommendation on Improving the Minimum Pay for Labourers in the Lao PDR number 808/MLSW, 9 February 2015.

(between 300-500 labourers) and small (with fewer than 300 labourers). The survey has interviewed 85 female workers and the results has shown that 57 per cent of them were from the northern region, 30 per cent from the southern region and 13 per cent from the central region of the country; 53 per cent were of Lao-Tai ethno-linguistic group, 18.8 per cent were Mon-Khmer, 2.4 per cent were Sino-Tibeto and the remaining 25.8 per cent did not identify their ethnic origin; 35 per cent of them were influenced by their friends and relatives to come to work; 24.6 per cent joined due to the family's poverty and wanted to help their family; 21.6 per cent joined because of the lack of employment opportunities back home and wanted to live in the city; 4.8 per cent joined because of radio and television announcements or sent in by company branches and others.

Migrant women workers CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 42-43

102. In 2013 the Lao Government submitted the Additional Report to answer the question in the Concluding Observation paragraph 43. In addition to clarifying in the Additional Report, the Lao Government has continued to attach importance to protecting the rights and benefits of migrant workers who have migrated to work in other countries with details as follows:

103. In 2013, the Lao Government adopted the Amended Law on Labour which has 2 new articles on protection of migrant women workers:

- Article 66 provides that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has the duty to administer Lao labour working abroad in cooperation with the relevant agencies. In cases where it is deemed necessary, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, may recommend to the government to appoint a representative for the administration of labour to be attached to the embassy or consulate general of the Lao PDR in a foreign country for the purposes of undertaking administrative duties, protection of, and representing the legitimate interests of Lao labour;
- Article 67 provides for the Rights and Duties of Lao Labour Administrator Abroad.
- In October 2014, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare has adopted the Ministry's Action Plan to legalize the status of Lao workers illegally working in Thailand to be regular migrant workers according to the law.

104. In December 2014, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare has issued a Decision on the establishment of the Steering Committee on domestic workers and legalization of the status of Lao workers in Thailand. The Committee is composed of:

- 11 Steering Committee members with the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare as the Chair and 3 Deputies: the Director-General of Skills Development and Employment Department Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Director-General of Department of Consular Affairs of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of Family Registration Books Management and Grass-Root Level Development Department Ministry of Public Security.
- Domestic Workers Committee is composed of 7 officials with the Deputy Director General of Skills Development and Employment Department as the Chair and 2 deputies: Deputy Director-General of Department of Consular Affairs of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Director of the Identity Card Division of the Ministry of Public Security.

- Legalizing Lao Workers in Thailand Committee has 22 members with the Director General of Skills Development and Employment Department as its Chair with 4 Deputies: Deputy Director of the Information Technique Management Division of the Immigration Police Department Ministry of Public Security, Deputy Director of the Foreign Family Book Division of the Family Books Management and Grass-Root Level Development Department Ministry of Public Security, Technical Official of the Socio-Cultural Research Department of the Prime Minister's Office.
- In April 2015, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare issued a Decision on the Appointment of the Legalizing Lao Workers in Thailand Committee. According to the information from Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, up to 31 July 2015, there were 136,260 registered Lao workers in Thailand, of whom 82,898 or 60.8 per cent were women.

Article 12: Equal access to health care services

Health CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 37-38

105. The Government of the Lao PDR has been implementing measures to improve maternal and child mortality as well as to support healthcare for children under five years of age as summarized below.

106. In 2011, the Government has promulgated the Law on Hygiene Prevention and Health Promotion:

- Article 36 identifies health promotion for women and children as one of the priorities for public health sector; every woman and child especially those in remote areas have the rights to access health-care services such as sanitation, disease prevention, health promotion, treatment and recovery before marriage, during pre and post-natal. Baby delivery must be done in the hospital, health-care centre, or if it is necessary to deliver, there must be a midwife, skilled birth attendant or trained traditional birth attendants to take care of the process;
- Article 37 specifies healthcare promotion for youth and for those at reproductive age group. Attention must be paid to knowledge and understanding of family planning and safe sex, pregnancy, child delivery and childcare;
- Article 39 specifies health promotion for people with disabilities. The society and authority at every level must pay attention to improve their wellbeing in order to ensure their capability to participate in societal affairs.

107. In 2014, Decree No. 273/GoL on support of child delivery and treatment of the children below 5 year of age was issued with set of principles, regulations and measures to manage and implement policy on supporting child delivery and healthcare for children under 5 years of age. The Decree focuses on encouraging pregnant women to have medical check-up and get assistance during delivery by covering the costs of travel, boarding and accommodation for one of their companions. Furthermore, in order to reduce maternal and child mortality the children under five years of age are eligible to access public healthcare centres nationwide especially those in remote areas. The management of funds for supporting the policy on incentives for child delivery and the treatment of the children under 5 is under the administration of the National Health Insurance Office and the National Committee for Health Insurance.

108. Sex education has been widely promoted to reach male and female youth audiences through radio programs which are broadcasted every Saturday and Sunday, 17:00-17:30PM on 103.7 FM of the National Radio Station.

109. In addition, the Ministry of Health with the support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other development partners, especially the Government of Luxembourg, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Save the Children and Médecins du Monde, is working towards producing 1,500 midwifes by 2015. The plan is also to train and recruit those midwifes to the healthcare centres and the district hospitals. The Ministry of Health is also working on the pilot project in creation of 'waiting home' before the delivery for the pregnant women in the remote areas.

110. Women's health showed a steady improvement over the past 5 years (2010-2014). The average life expectancy of the Lao population increased from 66.2 in 2009 to 68.3 in 2013.[22] The maternal mortality rate was reduced from 405 per 100.000 live births in 2005 to 220 in 2013.[23] Nonetheless, the situation of reproductive health varies greatly between rural and urban areas. On average, 1000 young women aged 15 - 19 have 94 children, but there is a significant difference between women from rural and urban areas: while 1000 women have 114 children in rural areas, 1000 women from urban areas only have 44 children. Moreover, the average birth space in urban areas is 46.3 months compared to 32.2 months in rural areas. The average age for the first birth of women aged 25-49 is 21.1 years old.[24] Although there is progress addressing women's health, Lao PDR still faces difficulties including access to health-care service for women in mountainous and remote areas, access to sexual and health information for single and young women, challenges in reproductive health as well as in antenatal and postpartum care.

111. The progress made towards MDG5 (Improve Maternal Health), including achievements and areas for further strengthening, is reflected in the LSIS Survey 2011-2012:

- The rate of births assisted by skilled birth attendants is increasing but still lower than 50 per cent;
- The rate of birth deliveries at health centres or hospitals is still low at 38 per cent;
- The rate of pregnant women receiving antenatal care increased from 35 per cent in 2006 to 54 per cent in 2011-2012;
- The maternal mortality rate was reduced from 405 per 100.000 births in 2005 to 220 per 100.000 live births;
- All districts have primary obstetric emergency and newborn health care services and most hospitals are able to perform caesarean sections;
- The rate of caesarean sections is lower than 4 per cent of all birth deliveries;
- The rate of safe deliveries varies greatly from region to region. In urban areas the ratio of safe deliveries is two times higher than the national average and 6 times higher than in remote rural areas;
- The rate of safe deliveries among the rich are 8 times higher than among the poor;

[22] UNDP 2014.
[23] WHO 2014.
[24] LSIS 2011-2012, National Statistics Bureau.

- The rate of safe deliveries for a woman with secondary education is 6 times higher than for an illiterate woman, based on data from the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), 2013.

112. Most Lao women (93 per cent) have never received postpartum care. Once again, this rate varies according to region, as 48 per cent of the women in the central region do receive one postpartum check-up. Women with higher education and higher quality of health care have the profile of those receiving postpartum care, while women aged 20-24 receive less antenatal care.[25]

113. Both men and women have access to knowledge on modern contraception methods and are most familiar with traditional contraception methods. 50 per cent of married women in Lao PDR use contraception methods, the contraceptive pills being the most popular. In addition, 42 per cent of married women use modern family planning. On average 1 in 5 married women needs birth control, mostly for limiting the number of children or birth spacing.[26]

HIV/AIDS CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 40-41

114. On 29 June 2010, the National Assembly has adopted the Law on HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention, Chapter V Section 2 stipulates social measures in various articles as follows:

- Article 32 states that Lao citizens, aliens, foreigners and stateless persons residing in Lao PDR have right to have access to information on HIV/AIDS control and prevention.
- Article 33 states that people living with HIV/AIDS and infected people have rights to have access to health insurance scheme in order to guarantee an equitable medical service as defined by a relevant regulation.
- Article 34 states that people living with HIV/AIDS as well as infected people are equal with other people in the society with regards to living in the society and daily life activities without stigmatization and discrimination.
- Article 35 stipulates that medical professionals and people working in the area of HIV/AIDS control and prevention should strictly keep confidential all information concerning HIV/AIDS patient, alive or otherwise, unless there is a court order or a willingness of the person concerned.

115. The Lao Government has also related gender equality to solving HIV/AIDS problems by integrating into the National Strategic and Action Plan for HIV/AIDS/STI Control and Prevention 2011-2015 incorporating principles of respect for human rights of the HIV positive persons and prohibiting any discrimination including due to gender, illness, sexual behaviour or sexual identity.

116. The Lao PDR has made progress in the areas of eliminating stigmatization and discrimination against the infected while also adopting the Law on HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention, which provides for the rights of people in the risk groups and pays attention to disseminating information on HIV/AIDS in society.

117. In 2014, the Centre of HIV/AIDS/STI reported that between 1990 and 2014, there were 7,072 HIV infected people, 4,337 AIDS patients and 1,659 deaths caused by AIDS. Of those HIV infected patients, 49.8 per cent are female. 51 per cent of the patients that receive the antiretroviral drugs (ARV) do not continue for treatment. Returned migrant labourers (especially female), service women and migrant male labourers without accompanying family are most at risk. Males tend to

[25] LSIS 2011-2012, National Statistics Bureau.
[26] LSIS 2011-2012, National Statistics Bureau.

receive more information about the risks than females, however, during the past ten years, the knowledge has gradually increased.

118. The National Strategy and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS/STI Control and Prevention 2011-2015 identified different principles especially respect for human rights of People Living with HIV and AIDS and specify that there should be no discrimination on the basis of gender, disease status, sexual behaviour or sexual orientation.

119. Lao PDR has made progress in addressing stigma and discrimination against People Living with HIV and AIDS. The endorsement of the Law on HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention provides the rights of the most at-risk group (though, according to the law, prostitution and drug use are illegal).

120. Condom use among service women was reduced from 94 per cent in 2009 to 92.5 per cent in 2011. There are about 5000 women living with HIV in Lao PDR. In 2011 the HIV prevalence was 0.3 per cent in the population aged 15-49 and 1 per cent among the service women group.[27]

Article 13: Rights to economic and social benefits

121. Lao women have an important role in contributing towards the economy of the Lao PDR as almost half of the labour force are women. Women occupy 71.8 per cent of the workforce within the service sector (guest houses, hotels and restaurants) and 63.6 per cent within the retail businesses and repairs. Similarly, women make up 57.9 per cent of workforce in production, 51.3 per cent in agriculture and forestry and fishery and 49.9 per cent of those self-employed and in family business.[28] Most female workers have lower levels of education than men. Women coming from rural and illiterate backgrounds are at higher risk of being taken advantage of. The survey of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions and CARE International done in 2010 on female workforce aged 15-35 working in the service sector of 3 districts in Vientiane Capital indicates that 26 per cent of women attending job interviews did not have education and came from provinces outside the capital.

122. There are 190 business group leaders in the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of whom 44 are women or 23 per cent[29] are women. The World Bank survey conducted in 2012 on enterprises of all sizes in Lao PDR has found that 31.8 per cent of those enterprises have women in their executive committees, in small enterprises (with 1-19 employees) 44.3 per cent of them have female leaders, medium enterprises (20-99 employees) with 16.5 per cent female leaders and big enterprises (100 or more employees) there were 5.1 per cent.

123. In the past 5 years (2010-2014), the Lao government managed to breakthrough to achieve most of the MDGs and the outcomes can be clearly perceived. The implementation of policy and remedy of social problems are improved. The government increased the salary as well as compensation indexes and expanded the social security system by paying more attention to cultural aspects, the protection of the interests of workers and social welfare. The Lao Women's Union set up a hotline for workers to be able to access information and services (including counselling) on issues related to the work place. In February 2015, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) issued the Notification No. 808/MLSW on Improving Minimum Wages in production entities, businesses or services, as well as for those working in the informal sectors and household businesses, who are not skilled and

[27] ESCAP in 2013.
[28] Survey on Workforce and Child Labour, 2010, CARE.
[29] Sub-CAW of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce 2015.

not qualified for any profession. The minimum wages increased from LAK 626.000 to LAK 900.000 per month, covering the working days that do not exceed 26 days per month, 6 days per week and 8 hours per day.

Article 14: Women in rural areas

Women in rural areas (CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 44-45)

124. Poverty eradication is the first priority for the Government of the Lao PDR. According to the results of the MDGs assessment in 2013, the ratio of people living in poverty has been reduced from 25.6 per cent in the 2007-2008 to 16.8 per cent in 2012-2013. Women's empowerment and development have improved along with socio-economic development. According to an assessment of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) done in 2012, 80 per cent of female-headed households are poor households.

125. Women in rural areas depend mainly on natural resources for their livelihoods. These women go to forests for non-timber forest products to bring food for family and to generate income. Women in rural areas rely on rainwater and rivers for agriculture production. However, due to climate change in the past years, Lao people, especially women and girls, are vulnerable to flooding from the forests and to draught. Most of flooding occurs during the months of May to October. On top of that, the consequences of storms include heavy rains and strong winds that cause quick flooding and take the lives, houses, animals and other assets as well as destroying their production land. Women still have limited knowledge and skills in environmental preservation and adaptation to climate change to mitigate the impact of climate change and natural disasters. At the same time, access to information, ownership, management and involvement for the reduction of pollution and the conservation of biodiversity remain limited.

126. Increasing and enhancing women's participation in the design and implementation of the local development plan with a view to mitigating social and environmental impacts as well as ensuring the needs of rural women are the priorities in the policies of the government of Lao PDR in improving the livelihood quality and in reducing poverty amongst different ethnic groups nationwide especially the rural women. This has demonstrated that the government of Lao PDR has paid attention in supporting gender equality, promoting women's advancement and preventing domestic violence at the household, village and district levels with the campaign on creation of developed family, village and district associated with gender equality and free of domestic violence especially against women and children as per outlined in Decree No. 309/PM, dated 14 November 2013.

127. In practice at local levels, the concerned authorities, the development partners, INGOs and NPAs have used various approaches for women's empowerment in rural areas:

128. The Poverty Reduction Fund, phase II from 2012-2015, worked in the remote rural mountainous areas of 10 provinces (Phongsaly, Luang Namtha, Oudomxay, Huaphan, Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet, Salavan, Se Kong and Attapeu), 42 poor districts, 278 cluster villages and 1,951 villages, amounting to US$ 65,700,000. The objective of the Poverty Reduction Fund is to provide the infrastructure for the poor people in these areas in order to facilitate their access to public services as well as to create favourable living conditions and gender equality for ethnic people. For example, in the selection of three priority sub-projects on rural infrastructure, two must be from the needs of women and one of men; and women should be the first to select such projects. Of 1,426 projects implemented from 2012-2015, more than 50 per cent were selected by women. More than 1,300

poor villages have directly benefited covering 683,797 beneficiaries of whom 50 per cent were women and 60 per cent were ethnic people.

- The representation of women on the committee for project administration at the village level must be 2/3 among the 5 members, likewise within the village fund management committee, 2 members must be women and 1 must be a man; more than half of the women should be involved in project's decision making.
- Community members have been organized to improve their livelihood by setting up of self-help groups linking with the creation of saving groups as well as other groups responsible especially for solving food shortages among pregnant women, young mothers and infant below 2 years of age. Furthermore, standard nutrition and family hygiene prioritizing the poorest families in the village have been promoted. Altogether there are 306 self-help groups in 85 villages as planned, totalling 4,406 members and of whom 3.220 or 73 per cent were women. The revolving fund for production activities reached 5.024 million Kip, such fund is used for family income generation by creation of awareness on ownership for women and ethnic people in decision making in solution for addressing poverty and food shortage in their families. Lastly, 15 nutrition centres were set up to provide nutritious lunches 3 to 5 days per week.
- Nam Theun 2 Project has developed gender strategy for gender-sensitive implementation and monitoring of the project's impacts. Women must be included to discuss gender issues in the process of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the resettlement plan and gender-sensitive procedure.
- The central LWU have included participation of women in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and implementation of their programme and projects, for instance, the micro finance project, commodities production promotion project, Land Titling Project and etc.
- Alternative development project to opium production in Houaphanh province under the cooperation between Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC) and UNODC implemented by the provincial and district authorities has included the Akha and Khmu women in the design, planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Vulnerable groups of women CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 46-47

129. The Lao government makes outstanding efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against vulnerable groups of women, particularly girls and women with disabilities.

130. The National Population and Housing Census 2015 has shown that there are total of 160,881 persons with disabilities in the Lao PDR covering 2.8 per cent of the 5,810,245 total population; 80,115 women with disabilities from total of 2,901,937 of the total women population and 80,766 men with disabilities from total of 2,908,308 male population. It is apparent that the ratio of persons with disabilities both male and female are the same and this information is based on 6 categories: 1. Vision, 2. Hearing, 3. Walking (or mobility), 4 Memory (or attention), 5. Self-care (hygiene/clothing) and 6. Speech or communication. One of the causes of disabilities was unexploded ordnance (UXOs) which covered 3.1 per cent. Figures on victims of UXOs have been included in Table 9 of the Appendices of this report.

131. The Lao Government has paid attention to the rights of persons with disabilities and the elderly persons as shown below:

- The Lao PDR has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Decree No. 137/PM, dated 18 April 2014 on people with disabilities was issued. The Decree defines principles, regulations and measures on the protection of rights and legitimate of disabled people so that they can have access to health promotion, disease prevention, treatment and recovery, education, professional trainings, stable employment, data information, source of funds, service centres and disabled people organization, all of which aim at eliminating discrimination against disabled people and creating conditions for their self-development, self-reliance and their participation in social activities. Article 13 of this Decree defines that women with disabilities have equal rights and value as others in the society in their self-development as well as political, economic, cultural, social and family activities according to law and regulations. Article 21 defines inclusive education for disabled people.
- Article 3 of the Law on Social Security in 2013 provides that the term of workers includes disabled people.
- The Amended Labour Law 2013, prescribes in Article 4: "The State focuses on promotion of employment for the poor, disadvantaged, persons with disabilities, unemployed, and for those with social problems, to ensure they receive labour skills development and have access to recruitment services in order to find employment, earn an income and receive fair treatment, with the aim of overcoming poverty." Article 9 of the same law has identified the persons with disadvantages, in poverty and with disabilities as 1 of the 5 target groups of labour skill development.

132. As for providing assistance to the victims of UXOs, the Government of the Lao PDR has adopted the National Strategic Plan on solving unexploded ordnance problem 2011-2020 of the National Regulatory Authority on Unexploded Ordnance in Lao PDR (UXO-NRA). The National Strategic Plan is aimed at raising awareness and knowledge on unexploded ordnance to reduce the risks of accidental explosions. Furthermore, there is an action plan on providing assistance and rehabilitation for the victims of accidental explosions.

Article 15: Equality before the law

133. The Lao PDR legislation provides equal rights to women and men alike, which was enshrined in the Constitution and various laws. Chapter IV of the Constitution 2015, Article 34 provides that the State recognizes, respects, protects and guarantees human rights and fundamental rights of the citizens in accordance with the law. Articles 35- 45 provide that all Lao citizens are equal before the law irrespective of their gender, social status, education, beliefs and ethnicity. The National Assembly has adopted a number of laws to ensure the rights of the Lao citizens without discrimination, particularly Article 13 of the Law on Criminal Procedure 2012 stipulates that the criminal proceedings must be conducted on the basis of equal rights of all citizens before the laws and the people's courts without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, education, occupation, belief, place of residence, and etc. Article 10 of the Law on Civil Procedure provides that civil proceedings must be conducted on the basis of equal rights of all citizens before the laws and the people's courts without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, education, occupation, beliefs, place of residence, and etc. Article 6 of the Law on the

Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children provides that all children are equal in all aspects without discrimination of any kind regardless of the gender, race, language, ethnicity, beliefs, religion, physical state and socio-economic status of their family.

134. The Law on Lao Women's Union 2013 and the Law on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Children 2014 were adopted to progressively achieve the equality of both genders. Furthermore, any violent act against women and trafficking in women are criminalised under the Penal Law, particularly Article 177 stipulates that any person who discriminates against any woman, or who keeps any woman separate from, or prevents or restricts the participation of any woman in any political, economic, socio-cultural or family activity, based on gender, shall be punished by imprisonment from one year to three years and shall be fined from 1,000,000 Kip to 3,000,000 Kip.

135. The Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children, Article 20 provides that "Promotion of the advancement of women and gender equality is one of the measures of the State to ensure women and men have the same values and equal opportunities in politics, economy, education, society and culture, family affairs, national defence and security, and foreign affairs as provided in the Constitution and laws."

Article 16: Marriage and family relations

Family relations CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 48-49

136. Article 4 of the Family Law in 2008 provides that women and men at the age of maturity must follow the principle of monogamy. The Government does not allow women and men to have more than one husband or wife, meaning that polygamy is outlawed in the Lao PDR. Article 17 provides that the invalid marriages are those that break the rule of one husband-one wife as defined in Article 4. The exercise of the right of men and women in creating family is based on Article 2 of the Family Law and Article 17 of Law on Development and Protection of Women which stipulate that the State and society promote and protect the equality between women and men in the family. Men and women who are 18 years of age or above have the right to marry on the basis of mutual consent, freedom and love. It is forbidden to force or hinder another individual's marriage. Article 3 of the Family Law and Article 17 of Law on Development and Protection of Women provide that men and women who have attained the age of marriage are governed by the system of monogamy.

137. Article 28 of the Family Law provides for the division of assets between husband and wife as follows:

- Each spouse possesses his/her pre-marriage assets;
- Post-marriage assets should be divided equally, except of wrongdoings by husband or wife such as adultery, asset embezzlement with final court order, the convicted person shall receive one-thirds of the post-marriage assets.

138. Each spouse has equal rights over matrimonial property regardless of who actually acquired the property. Each spouse has the right to use matrimonial property in accordance with the requirements of the family. However, both spouses must agree to any exercise of the right of usufruct or disposition in respect of matrimonial property (Article 27 of Family Law).

Data collection and analysis CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 50-51

139. In order to improve the national statistic system, providing information for creating and implementing socio-economic policies and monitoring-evaluating the progress of development made in various sectors and localities, the National Assembly has adopted the Law on Statistics in 2010. The law states that with the technical support of the National Statistics Bureau all sectors and equivalent agencies of the government must develop their own statistic system.

Preparation of the next report (CO53)

140. In order to prepare this report, the NCAW in its function as the secretariat to the government for the CEDAW in the Lao PDR has applied different processes in collection of the information and available data from different ministries, agencies, sectors and other concerned stakeholders such as:

- Reviewing reports of the Sub-CAWs of different ministries, the National Assembly, mass organizations, as well as the development partners particularly UNWOMEN, UNFPA, international financial institutions, INGOs and NPAs;
- Organizing consultation meetings with technical staff of the ministries, agencies, sectors and other stakeholders such as UN agencies and other development partners including organizations in the gender network and INGOs. Draft report was distributed to different ministries, agencies, sectors and other concerned stakeholders for inputs.
- The final draft of this report was presented to the Government of Lao PDR for consideration and approval.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and dissemination of the Concluding Observations CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 54-56

141. The success and progress made in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +20 in the Lao PDR is presented in Chapter II of this Report when reporting on the implementation of the related Concluding Observations.

The Millennium Development Goals CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 55

142. The success and progress made in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially Goal 3 (MDG3): Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women is presented in Chapter II of this Report when reporting on the implementation of related Concluding Observations.

Follow-up to concluding observations CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 58

143. The Government of the Lao PDR has submitted 2 additional reports on: "Combating Violence against Women" and "Women Migrant Workers" to the CEDAW Committee in October 2013.

Technical Assistance CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7, Para 59

144. The Lao NCAW and Sub-CAWs at every level have continued to coordinate and cooperate with various organizations both domestic and international and bring in the technical and financial support for the implementation of their workplan on topics of women advancement, gender equality, elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and violence against women and children. The Sub-CAWs at different levels continued to pay attention in coordinating and cooperating with different domestic and international organizations to obtain technical and funding support in the promotion of women's advancement, gender

equality, elimination of discrimination against women and violence against women and children.

145. The UNFPA has supported both financially and technically to develop the knowledge, capacity and communication skills, English language skills and others; creation of communication plans, coordination for gender equality and creation of the NCAW website; publishing various researches; drafting the progress report on implementation of the MDGs especially MDG 3 on promote gender equality and empower women; capacity building exercise for the Sub-CAW of the Ministry of Health in implementing the 5 year National Strategic Plan for Women's Advancement II (2011-2015) and set up programs for women's maternity and reproductive health, among others.

146. UNWOMEN has also provided financial and technical support to strengthen the NCAW particularly support for monitoring, controlling and assessing the implementation of the 5 year National Strategic Plan for Women's Advancement II (2011-2015); data gathering and report drafting under CEDAW on violence against women (CO 24) and women migrant workers (CO43) as well as the Lao PDR's national periodic report cycle 8-9 under the CEDAW to submit to CEDAW Committee as per regulations; celebrating and commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; women's access to justice; the fore-mentioned researches and other related works.

147. Furthermore, other development partners, such as ADB, Oxfam Novib, GDA, LAI and some others have provided technical support to the NCAW and the respective Sub-CAW in various sectors.

Chapter III

Conclusion

148. During the past 5 years (2010-2014) the Lao government continued to safeguard and develop the country aiming at graduating the country from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2020. A core part of these development efforts includes the implementation of the policy on the elimination of discrimination against women. This policy aims at gender equality realization, the promotion of women's advancement and a comprehensive empowerment of women. The implementation of this policy during the year 2011-2014 has produced the following achievements:

- Emphasis on the development of policies, legislations, strategies and action plans aimed at gender equality and women's advancement;
- Efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the following success:
    - The percentage of poor families in Lao PDR dropped from 27.6 per cent in 2007-2008 to 8,11 per cent in 2014;[30]
    - The net primary school enrolment rate reached 98.6 per cent (98,3 per cent for girls and 98,8 per cent for boys) in 2014-2015;[31]
    - The gross lower secondary school enrolment rate reached 78,1 per cent (76,0 per cent for girls and 80,2 per cent for boys) in 2014-2015;

[30] The Decision of Prime Minister No. 106/PM, dated 30 September 2014, on the Adoption and Promulgation and Assessment of Poverty and Development.

[31] Ministry of Education and Sports, Educational IMS.

- The gross upper secondary school enrolment rate reached 48.6 per cent (45.8 per cent for girls and 42.9 per cent for boys) in 2014-2015;
- The maternal mortality rate was reduced from 405 per 100.000 births in 2005 to 220 in 2014;[32]
- The under-one mortality rate was reduced from 70 per 100.000 births in 2005 to 68 in 2012.[33]

149. The achievements of the Lao PDR in implementing the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee are, but not limited to, the following:

- Broad dissemination and training on CEDAW and Concluding Observations to members of the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women (Lao NCAW), members of the Sub-Commissions for the Advancement of Women (Sub-CAWs) in line ministries, sectors, mass organizations, local administrations, the National Assembly and judicial bodies for implementation of the CEDAW;
- Greater efforts to improve and strengthen the Sub-CAWs at the central and local levels (provinces, districts and villages of 3 Builds), prioritizing the improvement and strengthening of the Lao NCAW Secretariat. At the same time, the operational mechanism of Sub-CAWs has improved the coordination, monitoring and reporting of CEDAW's implementation. Similarly, the development of Sub-CAWs plans and budgets for the advancement of women has taken place in alignment with the planning and budgeting of line ministries, sectors and local administrations at different levels;
- The policies of the Lao government on issues of women's advancement, gender equality, elimination of all forms of discrimination against women including violence against women and children, and women empowerment across fields have resulted in the following national documents, among others:
  - The VII 5-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015);
  - Legal framework of Lao PDR including the Constitution, the Law on the Development and Protection of Women 2004, the Law on Lao Women's Union 2003, the revised Law on Labour 2013, the Law on Combating and Preventing Violence against Women and Children 2014 and other legislations;
  - The II 5-Year Strategy for Women's Advancement (2011-2015);
  - National Action Plan on Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Children of the Lao PDR 2014-2020;
  - Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in Governance (2012-2015);
  - Women's Advancement Strategy of the Ministry of Education and Sports (2014-2015);
  - Women's Advancement Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2011-2015);
  - Women's Advancement Strategy of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (2014-2025);
  - Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion of Small-town Water and Sanitation Project of Ministry of Public Works and Transport;
  - The 5-Year Development Plan of the Lao Women's Union.

[32] WHO 2014

[33] Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) 2011-2012, page 194, LSB, Ministry of Planning and Investment.

- Emphasis on awareness raising among the Lao society for the purpose of changing social perceptions and behaviours related to gender equality, discrimination and violence against women and children. Important events organized for this purpose include the celebration of women's rights on International Women's Day (8 March), AIDS Day (1 December) and the Establishment of Lao Women's Union Day (20 July). The most outstanding achievement has been the launching of the campaign to combat violence against women and children during the celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), which was organized for the first time in Lao PDR in 2011. The involvement of leaders and high-ranking officers of the Lao PDR in these events had a strong impact on society and to encourage Lao citizens to change attitudes towards violence;
- Participation in international and regional initiatives on gender equality and for combating violence against women, in particular:
    - ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC);
    - ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW);
    - Review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action + 20.

150. Along with all the success and progress mentioned above there remains some challenges that requires further improvements and solutions which include the following:

- The dissemination on gender equality has not been broad enough to cover the whole population in the society, leading to some groups of people still lack adequate awareness and proper understanding on gender equality in the organizations of both government and private sectors. Furthermore, the awareness and understanding on the roles and duties of the NCAW and Sub-CAWs can still be further enhanced.
- The public understanding on preventing and combating human trafficking in society in general and in some specific sectors are not sufficient, leading to limited facilitation in implementing activities relating to the topic.
- The implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +20 is challenging. Women still face difficulties exiting poverty and accessing information on sexual and reproductive health for single women and youth. This is particularly challenging in the case of women living in remote and mountainous areas;
- The establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) presents both advantages and disadvantages for the Lao PDR. Challenges are expected to be experienced by female unskilled workers. In addition, there will be a greater tendency for migration of workers across borders to other ASEAN countries, where wages are higher. In the particular case of Lao PDR, there might be shortage of labour in some sectors in the country and subsequent problems arising in the domestic and social domains. ASEAN labour migration to the Lao PDR will increase because the population is small compared to that of other ASEAN members. Due to a reduced population of skilled labour in Lao PDR, such a migration pattern will result in higher competition in the domestic labour market, thus making it hard for Lao female unskilled workers.

Figure 1
Organogram of Lao NCAW

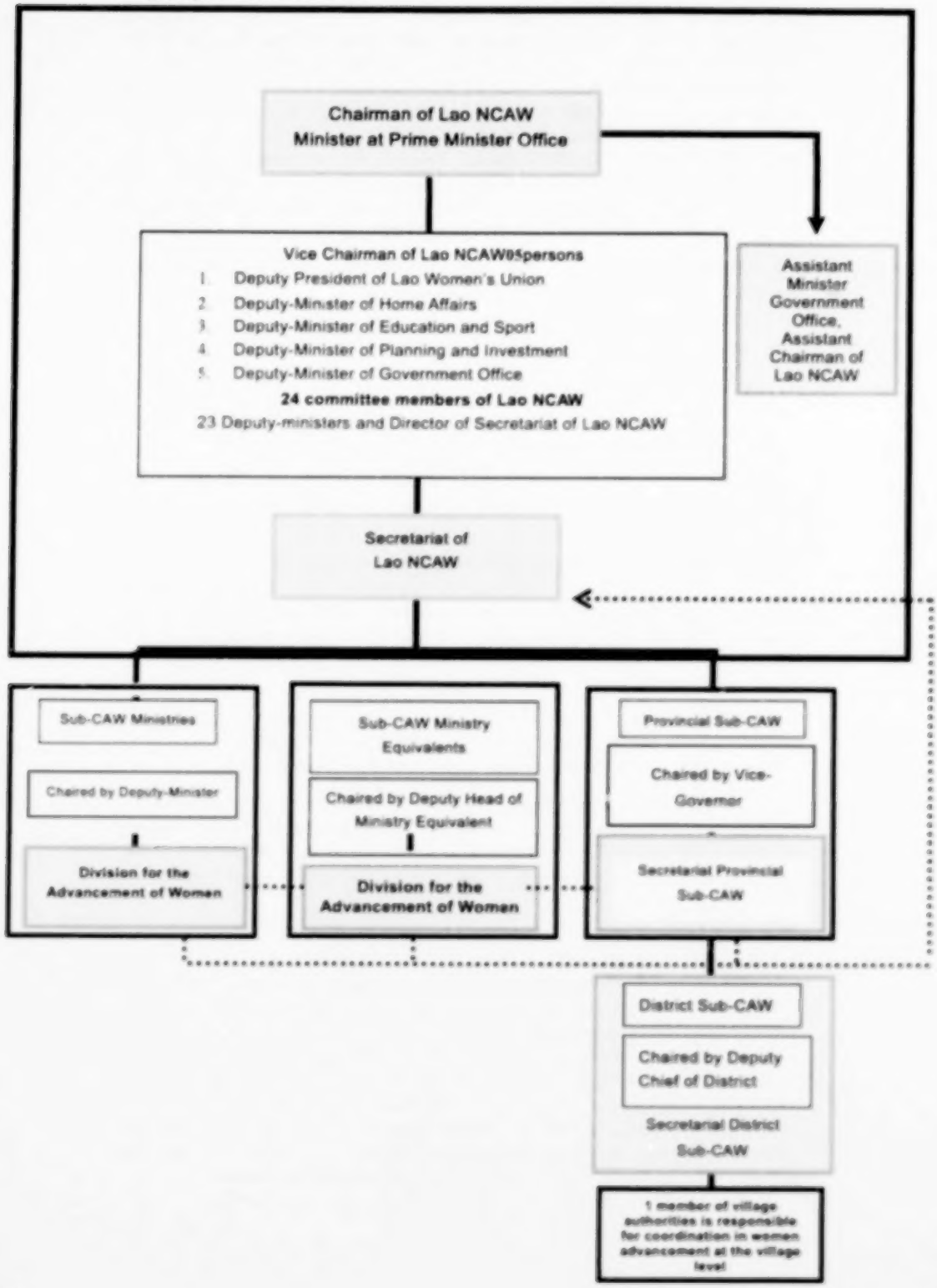
Chairman of Lao NCAW
Minister at Prime Minister Office
Vice Chairman of Lao NCAW05persons
1. Deputy President of Lao Women's Union
2. Deputy-Minister of Home Affairs
3. Deputy-Minister of Education and Sport
4. Deputy-Minister of Planning and Investment
5. Deputy-Minister of Government Office
24 committee members of Lao NCAW
23 Deputy-ministers and Director of Secretariat of Lao NCAW
Assistant Minister Government Office, Assistant Chairman of Lao NCAW
Secretariat of Lao NCAW
Sub-CAW Ministries
Chaired by Deputy-Minister
Division for the Advancement of Women
Sub-CAW Ministry Equivalents
Chaired by Deputy Head of Ministry Equivalent
Division for the Advancement of Women
Provincial Sub-CAW
Chaired by Vice-Governor
Secretarial Provincial Sub-CAW
District Sub-CAW
Chaired by Deputy Chief of District
Secretarial District Sub-CAW
1 member of village authorities is responsible for coordination in women advancement at the village level

Table 1
Education statistics

Description		*Total*		*Female*		*Male*	
	MDGs	*2009-2010*	*2014-2015*	*2009-2010*	*2014-2015*	*2009-2010*	*2014-2015*
Net enrolment rate in primary education (6-10 years of age)	2.1	92.7%	98.5%	91.7%	98.3%	93.7%	98.8%
Survival rate in grade 5	2.2	71%	78.3%	71.3%	80%	70.5%	76.8%.
Gross enrolment ratio in lower secondary education (Public and private)		60.2%	78.1%	55.5%	76%	64.5%	80.2%
Gross enrolment ratio in upper secondary education (Public and private schools)		33.9%	48.6%	30.4%	42.9%	37.5%	48.6%
Number of technical degree level student (public school)		14.009	18.236	34.3%	38%	65.7%	62%
Number of diploma degree level student (public school)		17.060	31.193	42.6%	45.3%	57.4%	22.8%
Number of bachelor degree level student (public school)		50.937	42.723	36%	42.9%	64%	65.1%
Number of master degree level student (public school)		763	1.244	37.2%	37%	63.2%	63%
Number of PHD students		-	22	-	40.9%	-	59.1%
Literacy rate amongst female adults 25-49 years of age	2.3				69%		
Literacy rate amongst adults 25-49 years of age	2.3						77%

Source: Ministry of Education, Education Information Management System

Table 2
Education sector expenditure by sub-sector

Description	*2012-2013 (Million Kip)*	*Recurrent shares*
Total expenditure	3,941,058	
Education Management	416,185	11%
Sub-sectors	3,524,873	89%
Early childhood	184,201	5%
Primary	1,593,588	40%
Lower secondary	718,633	18%
Upper secondary	489,176	12%
Technical and vocational	205,628	5%
Teacher training	99,346	3%
Higher education	214,278	5%
Non formal education	20,023	1%

Source: Education Sector Development Plan, 2011-2015. Review and Update 18 December 2013

Table 3
Reproductive health

No.	*Description*	
1.	Maternal mortality rate 2005)	405 persons per 100.000
2.	Maternal mortality rate (2013)	220 persons per 100.000
3.	Infant mortality rate below 1 year of age (2005)	70 Child per 1000 live birth
4.	Infant mortality rate below 1 year of age (2012)	68 Child per 1000 live birth
5.	Women of reproductive age who receive pre-natal care (2006)	35%
6.	Women of reproductive age who receive pre-natal care (2012)	54%

Table 4

Criminal cases of violence against women from 2010 to 2013 (CO14)

	Description	*Area Court (first instance)*				*Provincial Court (first instance)*				*Provincial Level Appeal Court*				*Regional level Appeal Court*				*Cassation Court Regional Level*				*Supreme Court*			
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	Physical violence	59	124	119	127	71	29	42	47	2	10	18	16	12	10	6	7	0	3	1	7	4	3	2	5
2	Adultery	88	132	124	140	38	12	10	8	0	6	13	16	8	2	2	3	0	0	5	5	9	1		
3	Human trafficking	0	0	0	0	22	18	17	26	0	0	0	0	3	14	6	18	0	0	0	0	3	5	4	1
4	Rape	10	1	2		52	53	69	61	2	2	2	1	4	12	13	10	0	1	0	0	2	4		3
5	Child rape	4	1	0	1	10	22	11	9	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	1
6	Obscenity	0	0	0	5	2	1	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Mobilization of illegal migration abroad	2	0	0	1	9	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Sexual intercourse with close relative	5	0	0		2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Prostitution	0	0	1	2		0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Total	168	258	244	272	204	140	150	160	4	18	34	37	30	46	28	30	0	5	6	12	20	15	7	10

Source: People's Supreme Court.

Table 5
Summary of Training on Laws related to Human Trafficking 2009-2014 (CO28)

			Participant	
No.	*Topics*	*Location*	*Total*	*Woman*
1.	Laws related to anti human trafficking to the judicial officers	Nationwide	735	112
2.	Victims identification, ethics of officers involved in human trafficking cases to the police officers, court officers and prosecutors	Nationwide	445	Not available
3.	Implementation and investigation of illegal immigration, human trafficking, exploitation of children and fake documents	Nationwide	10	Not available

Source: Report of the Secretariat National Steering Committee on Human Trafficking 2012-2013 No. 081 24 October2013

Table 6
Number of Service Women Attending Peer Group Activities 2014 (CO30)

	PSI	*NCA*	*PEDA*	*CHAS*	*Total*
	(LuangPrabang, Sayaboury, Vientiane Province, Vientiane Capital, Saravan, Champasack)	(Bokeo, LuangNamtha, Sekong, Attapeu)	(Xiengkhouang, Borikhamxay, Khamouane)	(LuangPrabang, Xiengkhouang, Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet, Champasack)	
January-March	642	269	272	1421	2604
April-June	626	347	234	1057	3555
July-September	761	277	294	1366	2698
October-December	823	275	323	1086	2507
Total	2852	1168	1123	4930	11364

Source: Global Fund Principal Recipient, Ministry of Health

Table 7
Percentage of Women in the National Assembly (CO32)

Election	*Total*	*Female*	*Percentage of women (%)*
I (1975-1989)	45	4	08.8
II (1989-1992)	79	5	06.3
III (1992-1997)	85	8	09.4
IV (1997-2002)	99	21	21.2
V (2002-2006)	109	25	22.9
VI (2006-2010)	115	29	25.2
VII (2011- 2015)	132	33	25

Source: National Assembly 2015

Table 8
Percentage of Women in Decision Making Positions (CO32)

No.	*Position*	*Total*	*Female*	*Percentage of women (%)*
1	Party Political Bureau Members	11	01	09.0
2	Members of Party Central Committee Secretariat	05	0	00
3	Members of Party Central Committee	45	04	09.0
4	Minister and Equivalent	50	07	14.0
5	Deputy Minister and Equivalent	126	21	16.7
6	Deputy Head of State Authority/Administration and Equivalent	29	04	13.8
7	Assistant Ministers	18	03	17.0
8	Director General and Equivalent	437	71	16.0
9	Deputy Director General and Equivalent	946	186	20.0
10	Provincial Governor	17	00	00
11	Vice-Provincial Governor	44	3	07.0
12	Chief of District	145	12	08.0
13	Deputy Chief of District	265	13	05.0
14	Village Head	8,651	145	02.0
15	Deputy Village Head	16,786	1,200	07.0

Source: Department of Public Administrative Development, Ministry of Home Affairs 2013.

Table 9
Victims of UXO

	Injured					*Deceased*					
Year	*Boy*	*Girl*	*Man*	*Woman*	*Total*	*Boy*	*Girl*	*Man*	*Woman*	*Total*	*Boy*
2010	47	7	33	8	95	9	5	9	1	24	119
2011	34	4	32	9	79	14	0	6	0	20	99
2012	11	2	17	11	41	6	2	6	1	15	58
2013	12	5	9	2	28	7	1	5	0	13	41
2014	9	7	8	5	29	12	0	4	0	16	45
2015	12	0	10	1	23	2	0	4	0	6	29
Total	125	25	109	36	295	50	8	34	2	94	389

Source: National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR.